



United States  
of America

# Congressional Record

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE 113<sup>th</sup> CONGRESS, FIRST SESSION

Vol. 159

WASHINGTON, THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 14, 2013

No. 162

## House of Representatives

The House met at 10 a.m. and was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. PETRI).

### DESIGNATION OF SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following communication from the Speaker:

WASHINGTON, DC,  
November 14, 2013.

I hereby appoint the Honorable THOMAS E. PETRI to act as Speaker pro tempore on this day.

JOHN A. BOEHNER,  
*Speaker of the House of Representatives.*

### MORNING-HOUR DEBATE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 3, 2013, the Chair will now recognize Members from lists submitted by the majority and minority leaders for morning-hour debate.

The Chair will alternate recognition between the parties, with each party limited to 1 hour and each Member other than the majority and minority leaders and the minority whip limited to 5 minutes, but in no event shall debate continue beyond 11:50 a.m.

### SPECIAL IMMIGRATION VISAS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. BLUMENAUER) for 5 minutes.

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Mr. Speaker, since 2006, when I offered the first legislation that ultimately became the Iraqi special immigrant visa, I have been haunted by the prospect of the brave Iraqi and Afghan nationals that risked their lives to help American efforts in these troubled countries, that they themselves would be victims because of their trust in us.

As my friend Kirk Johnson eloquently stated in the title of his recent

book, "To Be a Friend is Fatal: The Fight to Save the Iraqis America Left Behind":

For 7 years, it has been a battle to have the United States honor its obligations to those who put their trust in us when they helped us.

As the United States has withdrawn from Iraq and is winding down in Afghanistan, people with very long memories are searching out, hunting down, and killing people they regard as traitors because they helped America as interpreters, as guides, as drivers.

We have seen some bright spots. One was where the program we fought so hard to establish was going to expire September 30, at the height of the government shutdown. In a reaffirmation of our ability to get something important done, we were able, on a bipartisan basis, to secure unanimous consent to keep the special immigrant visa program alive, at least through the end of the year, so we can work the problems out.

Another bright spot for me was being able to be at National Airport a couple of weeks ago, late at night, watching Janis Shinwari, the Afghan interpreter who saved the life of Captain Matt Keller, walk out of that causeway with his young wife and two children. It was a storybook effort of the will of Captain Keller, whose life Janis saved in a firefight, who wouldn't give up after 5 years. At times we didn't think it was possible, but after false starts and great danger to the family, they are now safe in America. This is an illustration of what can happen with effort and, candidly, a little media attention.

But now we are watching the State Department drag its feet on these visas for Afghans who risked their lives, creating impossible burdens for them to establish whether or not they are actually at risk.

Recent news accounts make it clear that there is a committee at the U.S. Embassy in Kabul that is placing inor-

dinate roadblocks for people who we know are at risk, some of whom have already been hunted down and killed. We failed to establish a process that works for them.

We have only approved a trickle of the special immigrant visas out of the almost 9,000 that were authorized. It is unnecessary, it is shameful, and it is dangerous to long-term American interests. Who is going to trust us in the future if we need their help?

I was able to congratulate Secretary Kerry a few weeks ago for the State Department's rapid action to save the life of Janis, but every one of these thousands of cases should not require congressional intervention, extraordinary news coverage, and a major 5-year commitment from people like Captain Matt Keller.

There is no excuse to fail to make the SIV program work. Innocent lives are at stake, American honor is on the line, and our future actions could be compromised.

I would urge my colleagues to attend a session we are having next week to meet Kirk Johnson, who has dedicated his life for years to help these desperate people and for America to restore its honor. Join us next week in room 2168 in Rayburn on Wednesday for a special screening and discussion of the documentary "The List."

It is our duty now to save those who risked so much to help us when we needed them. They must not be left behind to the tender mercies of the Taliban and Al Qaeda.

### PULSE OF TEXAS: OBCARE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Texas (Mr. POE) for 5 minutes.

Mr. POE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, the health of the Nation is now in the hands of government. Let's see how it is working out for people who work for a living. Many Americans are feeling

□ This symbol represents the time of day during the House proceedings, e.g., □ 1407 is 2:07 p.m.

Matter set in this typeface indicates words inserted or appended, rather than spoken, by a Member of the House on the floor.



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